

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

1-3, 9, 10, 12-15 remain in the application. Claims 4-8, 11, 16 and 17 have been canceled. All of the remaining claims have been amended to eliminate the numeric references. Numeric references are not required under U.S. patent law and are given no patentable weight. Accordingly, the amended to eliminate the numeric references is not a narrowing amendment and is not an amendment entered for purposes of patentability. Claim 1 also has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 4-8. Claim 9 has been amended into independent form and claim 10 has been amended to define the invention more clearly.

The Examiner raised a few formal objections to the original claims. The amended claims address each of the Examiner's formal objections.

Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Crane et al. considered in view of Hirooka.

Hirooka shows a housing 12 formed with a groove 15. A power line 17 and an earth line 16 of a power cord 5 are embedded in the housing 12. An earth terminal 18 is secured to the earth line 16 and also is embedded in the housing 12. A screw 20 is mounted through the housing 12 and the earth terminal 18 and is secured to a screw hole 21 formed in the panel 7. FIG. 2 of Hirooka suggests that the opening 13 in the panel 7 is dimensioned to accommodate the mounting portion of the housing 12. However, in this initial position, the earth terminal 18 in the housing 12 would be misaligned with the screw hole 21. Thus, the housing 12 would have to be translated downwardly so that the edge 14 of the panel 7 slides into the notch 15 of the housing

12. In this properly translated orientation, the aperture in the earth terminal 18 could align with the screw hole 21 in the panel 7. Hirooka is silent as to whether the housing 12 would have to be rotated to ensure alignment of the earth terminal 18 with the screw hole 21 in the panel 7.

FIGS. 3 and 4 of Hirooka are different from FIG. 2 and would suggest that some form of insert molding is required to position the housing 12 on the panel 7. It is believed, therefore, that FIGS. 3 and 4 are incorrect and the FIG. 2 depiction was intended. Thus, Hirooka requires the housing 12 to first be inserted into the panel 7 and then translated along the surface of the panel 7 in an effort to achieve proper alignment of the earth terminal 18 with the screw hole 21.

Additionally, the Hirooka earth terminal 18 is embedded in the housing 12. Thus, grounding is achieved only by the screw that passes through the housing 12 and the earth terminal 18 for connection with the panel 7.

In contrast, the ground terminal of amended claim 1 includes a grounding portion that “projects outside the housing” so that the grounding portion is “fixable to a metal grounding panel.” The Hirooka grounding terminal 18 does not extend outside the housing. More importantly, amended claim 1 defines the housing as comprising “a positioning portion engageable with a non-round engaging hole on the metal grounding panel.” The positioning portion of amended claim 1 is further defined as being “being configured relative to the engaging hole to resist rotation and translation of the housing relative to the panel.” Still further, the positioning portion is configured “to position the housing at a position so that the grounding portion is substantially aligned with the fixing hole of the metal grounding panel.” With this construction, the grounding portion is

aligned with the fixing hole on the metal grounding panel merely by urging the positioning portion into the non-round engaging hole. It is unnecessary for the technician to manually translate the housing relative to the panel in an effort to align the grounding portion with the fixing hole on the metal grounding panel, as in Hirooka. Hirooka has no suggestion of a housing with a positioning portion that is “configured relative to the non-round engaging hole to rotation and translation of the housing relative to the panel” and in fact Hirooka requires translation. Accordingly, it is submitted that the invention defined by amended claim 1 is not taught or suggested by Hirooka.

Claims 5-7, 10-13 and 16-17 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Crane et al. in view of Hirooka and further in view of Tanner. The Examiner identified elements of these three references that were considered to be combinable. The Examiner further concluded that the hypothetical combination of these references would suggest the invention defined by the original claims.

Claims 5-7, 16 and 17 have been canceled. Independent claim 10 has been amended significantly to define the invention more clearly.

Crane et al. relates to a connector with a housing and terminal fittings that are inserted into the housing along an inserting direction. The terminal fittings are connected to a ground which is mountable to a panel along a direction parallel to the inserting direction of the terminal fittings into the housing. The housing has arms that extend parallel to the inserting direction of the terminal fittings into the housing. It appears that the arms are urged through a panel (not shown in Crane et al.) so that leading ends of the arms engage one face of the panel. The ground plate 36 engages

the opposed face of the panel. Crane et al. has virtually no description of the panel and certainly description that show relative dimensions or shapes of the opening in the panel as compared to corresponding parts of the housing.

As explained above, Hirooka shows a housing 12 for mounting to a panel 7. An earth terminal 18 is embedded in the housing and a ground bolt 20 extends through the earth terminal 18. The panel 7 has an opening 21 sufficiently large for accommodating a portion of the housing 12. The housing 12 includes a notch 15 for receiving a peripheral edge of the opening in the panel 7 at the opening 21. Thus, the housing 12 is urged through the opening in the panel in a direction perpendicular to the panel 7. The housing 12 then must be down and parallel to the panel 7 so that the notch 15 in the housing 12 engages the peripheral edge of the opening 21 in the panel 7. There are no resilient members at all.

The Tanner reference relates to a resilient clip that can be mounted to a mounting opening in a panel. The Tanner panel is formed with only one aperture.

It is not clear how these three references could be combined, and there is certainly is nothing in the references to suggest their hypothetical combination. In any event, it is submitted that the hypothetical combination of these references would not teach or suggest applicants invention as defined by amended claim 10. In particular, the references do not suggest a mounting clip with a base configured for engaging first and second opposed surfaces of the engaging hole in a panel, resilient locking pieces for engaging third and fourth opposed surfaces of the hole in the panel and pressing pieces for cooperating with the resilient locking pieces to hold the housing on the panel. As a result, it is submitted that the invention defined by amended independent claim 10

and its dependent claims is not taught or suggested by the hypothetical combination of Crane, Hirooka and Tanner.

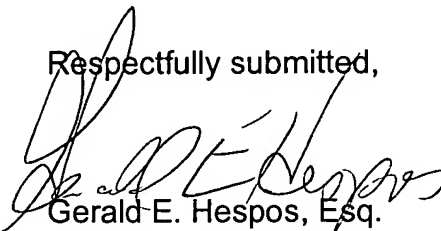
The Examiner identified claims 8 and 9 as being directed to patentable subject matter. The Examiner indicated that those claims would be allowed if amended or rewritten into independent form with all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 4-8. Accordingly, amended claim 1 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1 and hence should be allowed as well.

Allowable claim 9 has been amended into independent form with all of the limitations of claim 1 and claims 4-7. Accordingly, amended independent claim 9 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that all of the claims remaining in the application are directed to patentable subject matter. The Examiner is urged to contact applicant's attorney at the number below to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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